

August 1, 2011

John McKenzie
County of San Luis Obispo
Planning and Building Department

Re: Proposed Excelaron Conditional Use Permit (DRC2009-00002)

John,

This letter is in regards to the proposed oil drilling out in Huasna. We live in Huasna and have some definite concerns. We have attended the majority of the meetings and much of what has been presented is based on supposition or the honor system – ie – we won't be doing that – with nothing set in stone and no consequences. Several examples from the meeting: when asked about horizontal drilling, the answer was “our current plan is to drill down and we have no plans to drill horizontally at this time.” In regards to why they have purchased mineral rights for thousands of acres surrounding the current proposed project – “we can't really address that right now. The current project on the table is for Mankins ranch only.” Their own website says they have leased over 9000 acres. Hmm-doesn't really seem like they are being upfront and transparent. They assured us that they won't use hydraulic fracturing but that is not written anywhere. Hydraulic fracturing is unregulated so how will we know? What happens if they do? What are the consequences? If they break any of their promises or assurances – what will the county do? What will it take to get their permit revoked and their drilling stopped? A fine won't work – they will just pay it. None of their answers seemed to be definitive – they all just went in circles with no guarantees. Where is our guarantee from the county? Nobody seems to be able to give us one – once the project starts, we can't stop it.

One of our foremost concerns is water. Water is a really precious commodity out here and we cannot support any kind of commercial industry. We dug for water three times and ended up with non-potable or no water each time. Our current well for our house is over a mile away. There have also been some lots that have been unable to be sold due to a lack of water. I know they say that the drilling will not affect our water table but there doesn't seem to be a reasonable explanation of where the water they are using will be coming from and a guarantee that our water table will not incur pollution. The DEIR says that the project will not significantly impact our surface or groundwater resources. Define significant. What is the procedure for testing, can we get test results each time they are done and what is the consequence?

The traffic is also a concern. I run on Huasna Rd and invite you to come out and run or walk with me any time. We also have a large number of bike riders and no bike lane or shoulder of any kind. I understand that the oil tankers themselves will be coming and going thru Porter Ranch. I would like a copy of that agreement which we were told at the

meeting would be given to all who asked. You say that when the road is flooded that the wells will actually shut down. We all know that it is too cost prohibitive for that to happen. What are the alternatives? What are the consequences if they do use Huasna Rd? They said they would be checking on the trucks to make sure they do use Porter Ranch – how? GPS on the trucks? Will those reports be accessible to the public? What about all the other traffic? At the meeting they said 24 round trips a day for workers and other traffic. If they are providing 100 jobs – how does that work out? Does that include the drill rigs, the water trucks they need each day, the janitors, the porta-potties, the inspectors, the owners – how did they get that number? The EIR needs to specify that ALL project construction traffic use the Porter Ranch easement.

We are also concerned about fire. We understand that they have minimized the potential for fire as much as possible. But... what if one does occur? Will they have enough stored water to even begin the fight? The response time is pretty scary. The DEIR says proper design will reduce the potential but it still doesn't address the what if. Excelaron needs to be required to fund a volunteer fire station in Huasna.

Noise, odor and air quality. You have no idea how far noise travels in the country. You stated that the drilling and construction would only be for a short time – but then we find out that although it may be a short time – it will occur again and again and again. We live in an area that has very little outside noise – especially at night. Thus, we can hear things from miles away. Everyone knows when someone is having a party; we can hear motorcycles and trucks from miles down the road – especially if anyone is using air brakes. Most of us live out here for the quiet, the lack of lights, and the lack of traffic. How will the noise be measured and from where?

Property value is also of concern to us. It's a fact that values are declining for many reasons and those homes for sale in our area are not being considered due to the oil project. I know of several construction projects on hold, and others who have given up trying to sell their property until this project gets resolved. This project has suppressed values and if approved will drive down further the hard work and equity we've all put into our home and properties.

In summary, there are many reasons that we are not in favor of the Excelaron project. It is not a good fit for our community. We ask that the county look very carefully at this conditional use permit and either deny the project or be able to answer the many questions that we, the residents of Huasna Valley, have. So far, we have a lot of talk and empty platitudes, but nothing that makes us feel that this will be a safe and viable project that benefits anyone but Excelaron.

Respectfully,

George and Stacey Elliott
7360 Huasna Rd Arroyo Grande, Ca 93420
805 489-6598
Stacey@ParadiseEnvironments.com